

# A Checklist of What to Take with You

## Predeparture Planning

**Documents:** Plan to take with you to the United States any important documents that relate to your legal, medical and academic history. Do not put them in a suitcase. Do not loan or give them to anyone unless that person can show some form of identification stating that he or she is authorized to receive them.

**Legal Documents:** As a foreign national entering the United States, you must have certain documents as evidence of your legal status. These include:

- a passport with at least six months validity beyond your entry date,
- a nonimmigrant visa stamped inside your passport by a consular officer of a U.S. Embassy or Consulate,
- a Certificate of Eligibility (I-20 A-B, I-20 M-N, or DS-2019 form) for students and scholars,
- an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94 form), which will be issued to you, usually on the airplane before landing.

**Certificates of Immunization and Vaccination:** Ask at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate whether you must have a medical examination and/or immunization(s) before entering the United States. Regulations are different for each country of origin. For more information, go to <http://www.who.int/ith/>

**Prescriptions for Medication and Eyeglasses:** If you use prescription medicine on a regular basis, take a sufficient supply and a copy of the prescription, in English. If you depend on eyeglasses, it is a good idea to take an extra pair, if possible, and a copy of your eyeglass prescription, in English.

**Medical and Dental Records:** If possible, take along detailed and up-to-date medical and dental records.

**Academic Documents:** Take your official transcripts from secondary schools, colleges or universities. Additionally, bring any syllabi, catalogs, bulletins, course descriptions or other relevant materials issued by the secondary school or university you have attended most recently. These can be helpful to the Admissions Office and academic departments if questions arise concerning academic credit or your placement in courses at your U.S. college or university.

**Contact Information:** Include with your documents the name, address and telephone number of the individual at your U.S. university to contact in case of a travel delay or an emergency. Also include the contact details of a person at home and the name, address and telephone number of your country's consulate in the United States.

**What to Pack:**

- a good bilingual dictionary, since it might not be possible to obtain one for your language in the United States;
- books, manuals or journals that you think may be useful for reference in your field of study and that definitely will not be available in the United States;
- traditional dress and accessories for festive occasions. This would be a great way to show and tell Americans more about your culture and traditions;
- a camera so you will have souvenirs of your time in the United States after you return home.

**Do not Take:**

- things you can easily buy in the United States, such as notebooks, pens, paper;
- food, seeds or plants. The United States has very strict restrictions on importing foods, perishables and agricultural goods.
- books that can be easily obtained in U.S. libraries. Some universities have their library catalog on the Internet, where you can check the availability of books. You can also contact the university library staff to verify the availability of any essential books.
- animals;
- medications, unless you have written prescriptions from a doctor;
- expensive jewelry, treasured possessions, family heirlooms or delicate things, since there is always a chance that these items can get lost, stolen or damaged;
- firearms, knives, weapons or articles that could be perceived as weapons;
- narcotics or drugs;
- any article of clothing, artifact or medicine made from endangered animals;
- electrical appliances. Appliances in the United States work on a 115-volt and 60-cycle system. It is usually best to purchase electrical items in the United States.

Also note that video systems, including televisions, VCRs and DVD players (including those in laptop computers), use different systems in different parts of the world, and those you bring from home are unlikely to be compatible with the U.S. media.

Source: <http://www.educationusa.state.gov/>